



Episode 21: Be a Pro in the Know

Let's be honest -- REALTORS face an ever-changing industry. With emerging tech, growing trends, and a booming market, it's vital to keep up. Join me, Gilbert Gonzalez, CEO for the San Antonio Board of Realtors, as I get real with experts on what REALTORS need to know about this industry. It's time to get real.

GG ([00:23](#)):

With us today is Mark Mansour, 2021 Chair of the National Association of REALTORS, Professional Standards Committee. With so many new agents joining the industry and multiple offers on homes we want to talk about professionalism in the real estate industry and what that means. Mark, thank you for joining us today.

MM ([00:40](#)):

Thank you. I really appreciate the ask and I'm more than happy to be here.

GG ([00:44](#)):

You know, as the leader at the Professional Standards at the National Association, my first question out the gate is what does professionalism look like for our industry? We talk about professionalism and how it relates to realtors. What would you say is professionalism defined?

MM ([01:05](#)):

Professionalism defined? Oh, I'll get to, perhaps, how does professionalism relate to our industry even as of today? You know, I teach some classes here in our, in, in, in my state and some continuing education classes and, and of course my bailiwick is a code of ethics. And then right there, that's the first thing that we talk about is their promise. They realtors promise of professionalism. And, you know, let me, I want to, there is a difference between being a professional and then being a professional that shows professionalism. You know, we all have a license, we are all professionals. The players at the, it is my favorite team and I'm not doing it just because you're, you're from San Antonio but Texas Rangers are my favorite baseball team and those are professional baseball players. So, you know, the, the, the person that definitely works on my car, they're a professional.

MM ([02:07](#)):

So, we all, as in the real estate world, we have licenses, so we're professionals. We have to though, rise above the word professional and show the professionalism. I always ask that question by the way to, to the students and to the realtors themselves taking classes. What, how does, how do you interpret this word as it relates to our industry? And a lot of them will throw out, you know, one or two words, and

then you hear professional appearance, reliable, professional language, clean car, ethical behavior, organized, accountable, positive attitude, high morals, honesty, and it, it, all of them are correct. All of them are correct, but it's not just one or two of them. It is the barrage of a bunch of them. Professionalism is the conduct, it's behavior and attitude of someone in a workplace or business in the real estate profession.

MM (03:06):

In that environment, it leads to workplace success, professionalism, a strong professional reputation and a high level of work ethic and excellence. That is part of the professionalism. Again, we're all professionals. The actual definition of, Gilbert, of professionalism is the competence or skill expected of a professional. And there, again, I go back to that word professional, but is professionalism is a confidence and skill or skill expected of a professional. The key to quality and efficiency is professional professionalism. And it is a practice, it's practicing of an activity by a professional rather than amateur players. And you could also throw in the definition of the professionalism. It is the trend towards professionalism. So, there is a lot of I don't want to say definitions, but interpretations of professionalism. And in our business, we have to, in the real estate business being in real force, we have to show exude professionalism. We have to rise above other industries and show that.

GG (04:26):

You know when I first took code of ethics, way when I started in the association world, part of professionalism was defined. You know, you show up on time, you make sure your car is clean and you're dressed a certain way. And now over the last year we've been discussing about professionalism is how the way you portray yourself out to the community, right? And, and, and the things that you post. So, it's a lot, you just said so yourself, the definition is a lot. Is there a focus, a narrow scope that NAR is saying, this right here is the most urgent, and this particular focus is what we're going to take on right now?

MM (05:02):

The business real estate has changed dramatically. You know that, isn't it very dramatically since you have been in business. I've been in business since 1999. We've all had our orientations. We've had the code of ethics training you know, every four years, every two years back to every three years. But the code is served as a, as a steadfast reminder of the duties that realtors have, the client's customers, the public, and even to each other. So, as it evolves, especially in today's driven world, realtors do have that guide that spells out what's right, and what's wrong when it comes to social media, listing displays, data privacy, copyright protection, and other quickly changing issues. And because of that, the stay in the, NAR professional standards committee is on top of that every year and changes. And then, just for example, last year the, the monumental change of the standard of practice, or the addition of standard of practice, ten five under article 10, specifically states about the social media platform and what, what is, what has happened and what now is, is something that we have to abide by in our code of ethics with that change.

GG (06:28):

You know, one of the big projects that NAR rolled out a couple of years ago with C2EX, have y'all seen the positive effects that you were hoping for by taking that on?

MM (06:41):

Yes. Yes. I mean C2EX is your promise of professionalism. It was, it has received great adoption. There's 81,000 members so far that have enrolled. The, this November will be the three-year anniversary of the C 2 E X rollout. And it's growing every day with new users and new completions of the C2EX program. It's about 1% week over week increase in endorsements. And right now, they're at about 13,000, realtor endorsements. Some brokerages have implemented, some major franchise brokerages have implemented C2EX into their programs, their training programs. And the C2EX program has shown that some brokers have had reduction in their Eno costs, in their Eno insurance costs as a result of that. Even everyone in the office earning that endorsement.

GG (07:48):

That's fantastic. And cost-saving as, as a broker has got to be a great reason why to participate in that program.

MM (07:58):

It is very, and here's the, here's the great thing. It's free. You know, at NAR.Realtor. I mean, you can log on, there's no costs to take it. And that's, that's the beauty that NAR rolled out three years ago and they continue to update it. And you know, they have a committee for that. And so, they're definitely working. So, you know, after three years, November comes three years. If it wasn't working, it wouldn't be here, but it's there. It's on NAR.Realtor. C2EX, if any of your members you know need to get on there and just at least sign up and start going through it. It's incredible.

GG (08:45):

So, one of the pressure points for this market is in fact, the limited housing and the multiple offers, and that is causing a lot of pressure all around. I know I talked to my members and they're just, they're, they're tired, right? Because it causes so much stress on, on this situation. What are some things that realtors can do in these situations with regards to professionalism, to help keep making progress?

MM (09:13):

Remain calm? You know that, like you said, people are tired. Agents are tired. If, it's a race. You have people staring at the, at, at the MLS 24-hour hot market button every day. Remain calm. Remember what you learned; this is no different than how you list and sell prior to this shortage. Explain. And one thing that always best practices in what I do is I tell, I tell the agents, remember, we are in charge of the process. The clients, the seller, and the buyers are in charge of the decisions. And you have to remember not to go crazy and pull your hair out. Yes. Do that privately in the office, do that privately at home. Don't but don't show that to your clients. It is crazy. You know, one, one, one thing that we, all we always talk about in this market is explain to your clients, whether the buyer or the seller, what is going to happen before it happens. You explain that. You, you know, you get them to understand here are the great things that can happen.

MM (10:39):

Here are the nightmares. Then when we're ready and that house does hit the market and your buyer's ready to go, and it's a frenzy, still, remain calm. They understand what's going to happen if you explain it, and hopefully it will be smooth. And then be nice to each other, especially among your peers, other realtors. And that's where I'm seeing a little bit, cause we've always, in our area Gilbert, is it's always been a, we've had plenty of inventory. So, it's really been, our absorption rate has been pretty high. Our inventory has been high. So, this is some of the first time in, in my 23 years, 22 years that we've experienced this type of shortage of inventory. And I've kind of noticing the frustration among each

other. And, and that's where we have to stop, calm down. And remember there are peers, you know, we have to help each other, cooperation is huge right now. So, you know, if anything, remain calm. Remember the client is the one, the clients are the ones that are in charge of the decisions, we are in charge of the process. And we have to be and show professionalism in that realm of our inventory being this low.

GG ([11:58](#)):

And I think you mentioned it very well, which is we often think of professionalism as the way we portray ourselves out to the community, but now more than ever, I think there's a certain need for professionalism on the way realtors are treating each other, which is equally a part of the code of ethics,

MM ([12:16](#)):

Correct? Correct. I mean, it, it, respect for your peers. You know, you've got an article 15 article 16, article 17 talks in the, in the code, talks about how you treat each other and what not to do and what you can't do. And even though it's times like this and, and the busiest time as our president, Charlie Doppler, stated three or four months ago, it's one of the lowest inventory across the country. So, we have to remember to respect each other, show professionalism towards each other, and then it'll, it it'll come back to us, and it'll be okay, but we just need to calm,

GG ([13:05](#)):

You know, one of the things that I've heard a lot about, and I'd be curious to know if NAR has taken a pitcher position will take a position or their thoughts are, is letters to sellers. Buyers are trying to get every advantage they can to you know, get that offer and, and, you know, get that house and stand out amongst others. And it's kind of creating some problems. What's NAR position.

MM ([13:33](#)):

It is a hot topic. We'll tell you that. And I, and I want your members to know that NAR is planning to do a window to the law in August on the letters. Love, I call them love letters. Some people just say, does this the buyer's letters. So be on the lookout for that window to the law section on NAR.Realtor about that. NAR advises, and this is, this is, I received this from legal counsel Katie Johnson, is NAR advises to the members and every state to be aware of the potential risks involved in practice of using buyer letters. Even though we don't have any instances in which these letters have led to lawsuits or legal action of elsewhere in the country, they continue to stress that all parties in a real estate transaction should consider only legitimate non-discriminatory criteria when making business decisions as failing to do so though could leave realtors, in a comprise position, compromised position.

MM ([14:47](#)):

And we also recommend to the members to explain potential pitfalls to their clients while stressing the importance of sticking to the objective criteria, to adhere to federal and state fair housing laws. And again, to be clear writing and sending a love letter to a seller is not per se illegal, except though I will update you here. in Oregon, they just passed a ban on love letters this week. I didn't know if you knew that. So, you know fair housing laws are all about selling real estate to anyone who is required or who's qualified regardless of an individual's inclusion in any of the protected classes. So again, there's one thing for a buyer to say that they, you know, how much they love the property, the location, the style, the historic character of the home, but then most of the letters will get more personal.

MM ([15:48](#)):

And that's, that's where the, the, the warning, the heat comes but you know, you can see in, in examples just of a letter, I can see our family celebrating Christmas here, my wife and I would love to raise our family in this house. I finally found a home that can accommodate my wheelchair after months of looking. You know, we want to send our children to the, to the best school. So, you know, it just be careful on the letters, NAR stances to make sure you explain the pitfalls that could happen with those letters, if that makes sense, but definitely let's keep an eye out for that window to the law in August, too, for better explanation.

GG (16:39):

You know, you, you give me a perfect thought, which is I know when my neighbor was moving and they said, you know, no, no, we're going to pick the perfect neighbor to move into this neighborhood. That is completely an inappropriate thing to say. You should pick the offer. That's best for you. It has nothing to do with interviewing who my neighbor is and do they fit into the quality of this neighborhood? So, I don't know if people think about it that way, but that is definitely something we will keep an eye out for. As NAR's legal department puts that education out. So, I know you're working towards an NAR annual conference and there's a lot of work going into, is there any best practices focuses that you think that we're going to hear about at NAR conference?

MM (17:26):

There definitely will be some things that will come out of the NAR conference as far as best practices in, in our world today. Some of the things I do want to remind everyone is back in the early two thousand and they are created, what's called a pathway to professionalism. It was more of an etiquette and professional document that, that we would try to do as far as best practices. It does need some updating for, for the change in technology. I will tell you that is on the radar of the professional standards committee to put a group together to do some updating. But, you know, just some best practices, remember follow the golden rule. That's in our preamble to the code of ethics, you know, call, if you're going to be delayed, if you have to cancel a showing, encourage the clients of other brokers to direct questions to their agent or representative, be aware of and respect cultural differences, respond to other agent's calls, texts, emails, promptly, and courteous, courteously. Show courtesy, trust and respect to other real estate professionals to be successful in this business. Mutual respect is essential and, you know, real estate is a reputation business.

MM (18:57):

What you do today may affect your reputation and business for years to come. And, you know, these are just some of the best practices that the etiquette, that NAR has out there for you. One thing to remember, always listen to your broker, your broker is king or queen. So, there's, there's there will be some exciting things coming in November in San Diego. And you know, with the last year virtual meetings I do believe that the conference could, will also be available virtually. So, you know, if you cannot make it there.

GG (19:41):

So, Mark, as we wrap up is there any last things you would tell all of our members who are listening about professionalism and what you would recommend during this year?

MM (19:53):

One thing I would recommend is it's the classic concept of living above the line. And I don't know if you've ever, ever seen that, where you're a victim, or are you an owner. And in professionalism with the

real estate world, some keys to professionalism are realtors who respond to circumstances and take action. They don't show fear. They don't procrastinate. They face what's real and true, and they don't hide behind excuses and blame and very much blame, always blaming someone else, or they live in denial. A realtor, they're accountable for the results that are in their world, and they don't deny that they are responsible for their world. Showing professionalism is someone who chooses to and not that they must, they replace fear with action and does not freeze in fear. They ask why not, not just why

GG (20:50):

We've been visiting with Mark Mansour, 2021 Chair of the National Association of REALTORS, Professional Standards Committee. We appreciate all your hard work as your leadership and for all the hard work that NAR over the last hundred years has done to elevate the profession.

GG (21:08):

Thanks for listening to Get Real, be sure to subscribe for future episodes and share us with your friends on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. More information on this episode can be found at sabor.com/getreal. Until next time!